

High Cholesterol Medicines To Help You

Cholesterol is a kind of fat in your blood. Your body makes its own cholesterol but you also get it from the foods you eat like meat, potato chips, cookies, and eggs. Some people have too much cholesterol in their blood.

There are things you can do to lower your cholesterol. You can make changes to your diet and exercise at least 30 minutes most days. There are also medicines you can take to help lower your cholesterol.

Use this guide to help you talk to your doctor about how to best control your cholesterol. This guide lists the different kinds of medicines to control cholesterol. Ask your doctor to tell you about all of the risks and benefits of taking your cholesterol medicine.

Did you know?

- High cholesterol can raise your chance of having heart attacks and heart disease.
- Women over age 20 should have their cholesterol checked by a doctor.
- Most people do not show any signs of having high cholesterol.
- Sometimes cholesterol can build up in your heart and cause chest pains.
- You can find out your cholesterol number by getting a simple blood test.
- Your total cholesterol number should be under 200.

Good vs. Bad Cholesterol

Not all cholesterol in your blood is bad for you. There are three kinds of blood cholesterol that you should know about: HDL (good cholesterol), LDL, (bad cholesterol) and triglycerides.

	Good Cholesterol	Bad Cholesterol
What is it called?	HDL	LDL
What does it do to your heart?	<p>Helps to keep the arteries from clogging up</p> <p>Protects against heart disease</p>	<p>Builds up and blocks your arteries</p> <p>Helps to cause heart disease</p>
What should your cholesterol number be?	Good level = 60mg/dL or Higher	<p>Good level = Less than 100mg/dL if you have high risk for heart disease</p> <p>Less than 130mg/dL if you are otherwise healthy</p>

Medicines to Control Cholesterol

There are different kinds of medicines to control cholesterol.

- **HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors** (also called **Statins**)
- **Bile Acid Sequestrants**
- **Fibrates**
- **Niacin**
- **Combination Drugs**
- **Other Cholesterol Drugs**

There are many different medicines in each group. These medicines are listed on the next few pages. You will also find some general information about the safety warnings and side effects for the different kinds of medicine to control cholesterol. This guide only talks about some of the risks of taking these medicines. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about all of the risks of taking your medicine.

Write down the important facts about your medicine here.

HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors (also called **Statins**)

Brand Name	Generic Name
Altoprev	Lovastatin
Crestor	Rosuvastatin
Lescol	Fluvastatin
Lipitor	Atorvastatin
Mevacor	Lovastatin
Pravachol	Pravastatin
Zocor	Simvastatin

Statins: What You Should Know

Warnings

- Do not use these medicines if you have liver disease.
- Do not use these medicines if you are pregnant or nursing.
- Use these medicines with caution if you are also taking Gemfibrozil, Amiodarone, Verapamil, or blood thinners (anticoagulants).
- People who use some HIV medicines, birth control pills (oral contraceptives), Nefazodone, and niacin should talk to their doctor about the specific risks of using Statins.
- Drinking large amounts of grapefruit juice everyday may affect these “Statin” medicines.

Common Side Effects

- Gas
- Dizziness
- Constipation
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Upset stomach

Warning Signs

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Fever
- Dark urine
- Muscle pain
- Muscle weakness

For more information about the risks and side effects for each drug
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>

Bile Acid Sequestrants

Brand Name	Generic Name
Colestid	Colestipol
LoCholest	Cholestyramine
Prevalite	Cholestyramine
Questran (oral powder)	Cholestyramine
Welchol	Colesevelam

Bile Acid Sequestrants: What You Should Know

Warnings

- Do not use these drugs if you have problems with your liver or gallbladder.
- People who have bleeding problems, heart disease, stomach ulcers, kidney disease, or an under-active thyroid should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking these medicines.
- People who take Spironolactone should talk to their doctor before taking Colestipol (Colestid).

Common Side Effects

- Heartburn
- Constipation
- Gas
- Indigestion
- Nausea

Warning Signs

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Sudden weight loss
- Unusual bleeding from gums or rectum

**For more information about the risks and side effects for each drug
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

Fibrates

Brand Name	Generic Name
Lopid	Gemfibrozil
Tricor	Fenofibrate
Antara	Fenofibrate
Triglide	Fenofibrate

Fibrates: What You Should Know

Warnings

- People with kidney problems, gallbladder disease, or liver disease should not use Lipid or Tricor.
- Do not use these drugs if you are taking other medicines to control cholesterol (HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors also called “Statins”).
- Pregnant women or women who are breastfeeding should talk to their doctor about the risk of taking Lipid and Tricor.
- People who take diabetes medicines or blood thinners (anticoagulants) should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking Lipid and Tricor.

Common Side Effects

- Headache
- Constipation or Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Stomach pain
- Flushing (redness of the face or neck)

Warning Signs

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Jaundice (skin or eyes look yellow)

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Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>

Niacin

Brand Name	Generic Name
Niaspan	Niacin

Niacin: What You Should Know

Warnings

- Do not use Niaspan if you have liver disease or if you are taking an immediate-release niacin pill.
- Do not use Niaspan if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- People who are taking aspirin, high blood pressure medicines, HMG CoA Reductase Inhibitors ("Statins"), or medicines to lower bile acid should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking Niacin (Niaspan).
- People with kidney disease, peptic ulcer, diabetes, or chest pain should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking this drug.
- People who have had a heart attack or gout should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking this drug.

Common Side Effects

- Headache
- Upset stomach
- Heartburn
- Diarrhea
- Flushing (redness of the face or neck)

Warning Signs

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Fast heartbeat
- Fainting
- Dizziness
- Jaundice (skin or eyes look yellow)

For more information about the risks and side effects for each drug
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>

Combination Drugs

Brand Name	Generic Name
Vytorin	Ezetimibe and Simvastatin
Advicor	Niacin and Lovastatin

Combination Drugs: What You Should Know

Warnings

- Do not take Vytorin or Advicor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Do not take Vytorin if you have liver disease.
- People taking Gemfibrozil (Lopid), Fenofibrate (Tricor), high blood pressure medicines, Protease Inhibitors (medicines to treat HIV) or blood thinners (anticoagulants) should use caution when taking Vytorin or Advicor.
- If you drink large amounts of grapefruit juice everyday, it may affect Advicor.

Common Side Effects

- Headache
- Flushing (redness of the face or neck)
- Upset stomach

Warning Signs

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Dark urine
- Stomach pain
- Muscle pain, tenderness or weakness
- Jaundice (skin or eyes look yellow)

For more information about the risks and side effects for each drug
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Other Drugs

Brand Name	Generic Name
Zetia	Ezetimibe

Other Drugs: What You Should Know

Warnings

- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not take Zetia with another cholesterol medicine.
- People who have liver disease should not take Zetia with another cholesterol medicine.
- Use caution if you are taking blood thinners (anticoagulants).

Common Side Effects

- Feeling tired
- Stomach pain

Warning Signs

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness
- Stomach pain
- Swelling of the face or lips
- Severe itching

For more information about the risks and side effects for each drug
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>

To Learn More

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Health Information Center

Phone: 301-592-8573

Web: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/infoctr/index.htm>

The National Women's Health Information Center

Phone: 1-800-994-WOMAN (1-800-994-9662)

1-888-220-5446 for the hearing impaired

Web: <http://www.4women.gov/faq/cholesterol.htm>



This information reflects FDA's current analysis of data available to FDA concerning these products. FDA intends to update this sheet when additional information or analyses become available.

Check the following website for the most recent information about each drug:
<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>